



“TRAIL MIX TENDERS”

SPECIFICATION



The basis of the patent application for a food product known as Trail Mix Tenders is the composition developed to create this new product form.

Trail Mix Tenders are ground and formed, smokehouse dried, snack meat food products nutritionally enhanced by the inclusion of both dried fruits and crushed nuts or seeds. The inclusion of these nutritional adjuncts is achieved in the pre-smokehouse preparation of the meat. The selected meat is placed into a grinder/mixer with dry ingredients (seasonings and additives) and the fruit and nut/seed combination. It is then thoroughly mixed for even distribution of all ingredients. This mixture is left to “set” for approximately 8 hours. It is then processed by extruding the blended materials through a flattened “horn” forming individual strips (Tenders) approximately 7" long x 1" wide weighing approximately 1 ounce. The strips are then placed into a heated smokehouse and smoked/cooked to an internal temperature of 175 degrees. After the smoking process, the strips are air cooled and individually packaged. Packaging is of a vacuum type, allowing for a shelf stable product with a minimum expiration period of six months with no refrigeration. The total process results in a snack meat “Tender” with a moisture to protein ratio of 1.9 to 1.0, producing a pleasantly dried yet tender “formed” snack meat. The addition of the fruit results in a release of natural fruit sugars which permeate the product with a slight sweetness unlike any traditional dried snack meats. The further inclusion of crushed nuts provides not only a visual impact by their presence but imbues an additional flavor characteristic with a slightly “crunchy” nut accent.

The current state of the art for snack meats of this type (dried, kippered, jerky) consists of numerous seasoning oriented flavor styles such as “Spicey,” “Peppered,” “Smokey,” and “Teriyaki,”

etc. It, however, fails to provide inclusions other than seasonings for variation. The Trail Mix Tenders composition not only fills the need for the ability to provide greater flavor variety, it also addresses the importance of nutritional function. Dried fruit and nut inclusions provide substantial additional nutrient factors (vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, essential fatty acids, fiber, phytochemicals) not available in any other snack meat.



With current and growing consumption of healthier more nutritious foods and the public's love of convenience/snack products, the market potential for the Trail Mix Tender composition is tremendous. Snack meats alone generate in excess of 1.2 billion dollars in annual sales according to "Information Resources Inc." A nutritionally superior snack meat would only serve to generate greater interest in this segment.

INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

Meat	74.6% - 54.6%
Fruit	10.0% - 20.0%
Nut/Seed	10.0% - 20.0%
Salt	2.03%
Corn syrup solid	1.67%
Dextrose	(.81%)
Spices	(.73%)
Maple Sugar	(.06%)
Sugar	(.05%)
Sodium Erythorbate	(.04%)
Sodium Nitrite	(.012%)

TOTAL

100.00% (by weight)



DEVELOPMENT STATUS

The initial concept for the Trail Mix Tender composition was done on December 15, 1998. This was followed by months of research and development founding raw material sources and acceptable complementary flavor combinations. Actual production of the first prototype was done on October 20, 1999 at Silver Creek Specialty Meats, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Silver Creek, a small family-owned meat processing company with over 30 years of experience, provided technical assistance and production facilities. All parties involved in the development of the Trail Mix Tenders composition have signed a confidentiality agreement.

To date, a market-ready version of a Trail Mix Tender has not been offered for commercial sale. Packaging and display designs have been completed. Design modifications such as size and configuration variants are planned to meet existing industry standards.

No government grants or funds were employed in the development of the Trail Mix Tenders composition.

Until acceptance of the patent application, there is currently no legal protection for the Trail Mix Tenders composition other than the non-disclosure confidentiality agreement signed by parties involved in the research and development of pre-production.

The date for initial sales of market-ready variations of Trail Mix Tenders is planned for October 15, 2000.

